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Melksham Urban District Council


THE
ANNUAL REPORT
of the
Medical Officer of Health
and the
Public Health Inspector
for the Year 1961

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To the Chairman and Members of the

MELKSHAM URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present the Annual Report for 1961 on the health of the Melksham Urban District.

A measles epidemic following the characteristic biennial pattern occurred during the second and third quarters of the year. Children in the five to nine years age group were principally affected. Cases of other infectious diseases were not numerous.

During the year poliomyelitis vaccination continued and an additional table shows the measure of acceptance of this. Figures are also given relating to tetanus immunisation which was introduced last year.

I wish to thank the Members of the Council and particularly the Health Committee for their encouragement and support during the year and the officials for their willing co-operation.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

P. J. SPELLER,

Medical Officer of Health.

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS OF THE AUTHORITY

Medical Officer of Health:

P. J. SPELLER, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.,
who is also Medical Officer of Health to Bradford and
Melksham Rural District and Assistant County Medical
Officer of Health.

Office : 1 King Street, Melksham. Tel. Melksham 2307.

Public Health Inspector:

W. F. ACRES, M.A.P.H.I., A.R.S.H.

Office : 1 King Street, Melksham. Tel. Melksham 2307.

GENERAL STATISTICS

Area of the District (Acres)	...	...	...	1,042
Estimated Population	...	...	...	8,290
Number of Inhabited Houses	...	...	...	2,582
Rateable Value	...	...	...	£127,691
Sum represented by a penny rate	...	...	...	£505

EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS

The following statistics have been compiled from information received from the Registrar General :—

Births

Live Births

<i>Births</i>				<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Legitimate	...	...	...	89	72	161
Illegitimate	...	...	...	3	5	8
Total number of live births				92	77	169

Birth Rate for the District (i.e. per 1,000 population)	...	19
Comparative figure for England and Wales	...	17.4

Still Births

<i>Births</i>				<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Legitimate	...	...	...	3	—	3
Illegitimate	...	...	...	1	—	1
Total number of still births				4	—	4

Still Birth Rate for the District per 1,000 total Live and				
Still Births	...	...	...	23.1
Comparative figure for England and Wales	...	...	...	18.7

Deaths

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Number of Deaths in the Area ...	48	32	80
Local Death Rate (i.e., per 1,000 population)		...	11.9
Comparative figure for England and Wales ...		...	12.0

Infant Mortality

Deaths of Infants under 1 year

<i>Deaths</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Legitimate	2	4	6
Illegitimate	1	—	1
Total number of deaths ...	3	4	7

Deaths of Infants under 4 weeks of age (included above)

<i>Deaths</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Legitimate	1	4	5
Illegitimate	1	—	1
Total number of deaths ...	2	4	6

Deaths of Infants under 1 week of age (included above)

<i>Deaths</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Legitimate	1	4	5
Illegitimate	—	—	—
Total number of deaths ...	1	4	5

Infant Mortality Rates

Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 Live Births—Total ...	41.4
Comparative figure for England and Wales	21.4
Neo-Natal Mortality Rate per 1,000 live births (1st four weeks)	35.5

Causes of Deaths

The causes of deaths classified according to the Registrar General's system, are given in the following table:—

	Male	Female	Total
Tuberculosis (respiratory)	—	—	—
(other)	—	—	—
Syphilitic disease	—	—	—
Diphtheria	—	—	—
Whooping Cough	—	—	—
Meningococcal infections	—	—	—
Acute Poliomyelitis	—	—	—
Measles	—	—	—
Other Infective and Parasitic disease ...	1	—	1
Malignant Neoplasm (stomach) ...	1	1	2
(lung bronchus) ...	5	—	5
(breast) ...	—	—	—
(uterus) ...	—	—	—
Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms	3	6	9
Leukaemia, aleukaemia	1	1	2
Diabetes	—	—	—
Vascular lesions of nervous system ...	4	7	11
Coronary disease, Angina	10	3	13
Hypertension with heart disease ...	1	—	1
Other heart disease	3	2	5
Other circulatory disease	2	1	3
Influenza	1	—	1
Pneumonia	2	1	3
Bronchitis	3	—	3
Other diseases of the respiratory system	—	—	—
Ulcer of stomach and duodenum ...	1	—	1
Gastritis, Enteritis and Diarrhoea ...	—	—	—
Nephritis and Nephrosis	—	—	—
Hyperplasia of prostate	1	—	1
Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion ...	—	—	—
Congenital malformations	2	1	3
Other defined and ill defined diseases ...	3	3	6
Motor vehicle accidents	2	1	3
All other accidents	1	3	4
Suicide	1	2	3
Homicide and Operations of War ...	—	—	—
Totals	48	32	80

Age and Sex Incidence of Death from Heart and Arterial Disease

THESE TABLES HAVE BEEN COMPILED FROM LOCAL INFORMATION

Under 30		Under 40		Under 50		Under 60		Under 70		Under 80		Under 90		Over 90	
M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
—	—	—	—	1	—	1	2	8	2	6	4	3	5	1	—

Age and Sex Incidence of Death from Cancer

Location of Cancer	Under 30		Under 40		Under 50		Under 60		Under 70		Under 80		Under 90		Over 90	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
Cancer of Bowel ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cancer of Breast ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cancer of Lung ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	2	—	1	—	—	—
Cancer of Stomach	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1	—	—	—
Alimentary (other than above)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—
Genital ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Reproductive ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—
Miscellaneous ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—

OUTLINE OF THE HEALTH SERVICES OPERATING IN THE AREA

Laboratory Facilities

The Public Health Laboratory, Manor Hospital, Bath, undertakes all necessary bacteriological and pathological examinations in the district.

The laboratory with its skilled staff, provides a most valuable service with regard to the examination of drinking water, food and milk sample throat swabs, etc., and their willing co-operation and expert advice is much appreciated.

Hospital Facilities

The South-Western Regional Hospital Board is responsible for hospital facilities in this district.

The two hospitals in the area are a general hospital at Melksham, and a hospital for the chronic sick at Semington. Other general hospitals are situated in the neighbouring towns, with larger ones in Bath and Bristol.

Melksham Hospital with its very pleasant surroundings admits a wide variety of medical and surgical cases and is a most efficient and well-run unit of 42 beds. Melksham is indeed fortunate in having so excellent and so modern a hospital with such exceptional amenities at its disposal.

The nearest hospital for the treatment of common infectious disease is Bath Isolation Hospital. The nearest Smallpox Hospital is at Bristol.

County Health Facilities

The following health services operating in the district are provided by the County Health Committee :—

Care of expectant and nursing mothers and young children.
Domiciliary Midwifery.

Health Visiting.

Home Nursing.

Arrangements for vaccination and immunisation.

Ambulances and ambulance cars.

Domestic Helps.

Arrangements under Part III of the National Health Service Act for the prevention of illness; care and after-care; and health education.

Mental Health Service.

PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Comparison with Previous Years

<i>Disease</i>	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961
Scarlet Fever	4	2	2	4	1	2
Whooping Cough	17	57	1	19	1	10
Poliomyelitis—Paralytic ...	—	—	1	—	—	—
Non-paralytic	—	—	—	—	—	1
Measles	4	19	5	287	2	231
Diphtheria	—	—	—	—	—	—
Pneumonia	—	1	1	—	—	—
Dysentery	—	1	—	3	14	—
Salmonellosis	—	—	—	—	1	—
Erysipelas	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ophthalmia neonatorum ...	—	—	—	—	—	—
Puerperal pyrexia	—	—	1	—	—	—
Meningococcal infection ...	1	—	—	—	—	—
Tuberculosis	4	3	2	1	3	1

Analysis under Age Groups

The distribution of cases according to age and sex are shown in the following tables.

<i>Age Groups</i>	<i>Scarlet Fever</i>		<i>Whooping Cough</i>		<i>Acute Poliomyelitis</i>		<i>Measles</i>		<i>Dysentery</i>	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
Under 1 year	—	—	2	1	—	—	6	3	—	—
1-2 years	—	—	1	—	—	—	24	22	—	—
3-4 years	—	—	1	2	—	—	36	25	—	—
5-9 years	—	—	2	1	—	—	52	58	—	—
10-14 years	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	—	—
15-24 years	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
25 and over	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Not known	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	2	—	6	4	1	—	118	113	—	—

<i>Age Groups</i>	<i>Pneu- monia</i>		<i>Salmon- ellosis</i>		<i>Erysipelas</i>		<i>Puerperal Pyrexia</i>		<i>Tuber- culosis</i>		<i>Meningo- coccal Inf.</i>	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
Under 5 years	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5-14 years	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
15-44 years	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
45-64 years	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
65 and over	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Not known	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—

Poliomyelitis

One case of acute non-paralytic poliomyelitis was confirmed in a young man aged 19 years who was temporarily resident in Melksham. He had returned from a touring Continental holiday immediately prior to the onset of the illness, which was of a mild nature.

Tuberculosis

NEW CASES

						No. of Cases
1956	...	...	...	...	...	4
1957	...	...	...	...	...	3
1958	...	...	...	...	...	2
1959	...	...	...	...	...	1
1960	...	...	...	...	...	3
1961	...	...	...	...	...	1

Distribution of new cases according to age, sex, and localisation of disease, is as follows:—

Age Periods	New Cases				Deaths	
	Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary			
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
Under 1 year	—	—	—	—	—	—
1-5 years	—	—	—	—	—	—
6-15 year	—	—	—	—	—	—
16-25 years	—	—	—	—	—	—
26-35 years	—	1	—	—	—	—
36-45 years	—	—	—	—	—	—
46-55 years	—	—	—	—	—	—
56-65 years	—	—	—	—	—	—
Over 65	—	—	—	—	—	—
Unknown	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	—	1	—	—	—	—

From the above table it will be seen that 1 case of pulmonary tuberculosis was notified during 1961. No deaths from tuberculosis were recorded.

Housing of Tuberculosis Patients

Cases are from time to time referred by the Chest Physician for consideration for re-housing. These cases are classified as follows:—

- Certificate No. 1.** Sputum-positive cases where re-housing is considered urgent for the prevention of infection.
- Certificate No. 2.** Where better housing would be desirable in order to improve and maintain the patient's health.
- Certificate No. 3.** Where improved housing would be beneficial but is not an urgent matter.

Mass Radiography

The results of the survey held in Melksham in July are as follows:—

<i>Premises</i>	<i>Total Films</i>		<i>Active Tuberculosis</i>		<i>Inactive Tuberculosis</i>		<i>Other Conditions</i>	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
Assembly Hall, Melksham	634	467	—	—	1	1	1	3
Avon India Rubber Co. Ltd.	1304	336	1	—	1	1	3	—
Spencer (Melksham) Ltd.	225	29	—	—	—	—	2	—
Wilts United Dairies Ltd.	104	44	—	—	—	—	2	—

Diphtheria Immunisation

Diphtheria immunisation is carried out systematically throughout the district by General Practitioners and County Medical Officers, in homes, schools and clinics.

Immunisation Statistics, 1961

<i>Year of Birth</i>		1961	1960	1959	1958	1957	1952-56	1947-51	15 & over
Primary imms. completed during 1961	Diph.	62	65	9	6	5	16	6	—
	Wh/c.	62	64	8	4	5	5	—	—
	Tet.	62	65	10	6	6	69	23	21
Reinf. injections administered during 1961	Diph.	—	1	10	11	4	91	5	—
	Wh/c.	—	1	10	11	4	21	3	—
	Tet.	—	1	11	11	3	31	4	4

As shown in the above table 169 primary and 122 reinforcing immunisations against diphtheria were undertaken. 148 primary and 50 reinforcing immunisations against whooping cough were performed.

Poliomyelitis Immunisations

Completed Injections during 1961

<i>Persons born</i>				2nd	3rd	4th
1943 - 1961	...	...	...	202	208	607
1933 - 1942	...	...	...	45	66	—
Before 1933, but who had not reached 40 years of age	...	...	...	104	335	—
Others	...	...	...	5	8	—
				356	617	607

Vaccination

Number of persons vaccinated (or re-vaccinated) during 1961:—

<i>Age Group</i>	<i>Under 1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2-4</i>	<i>5-14</i>	<i>15 or over</i>
Vaccinations	75	7	5	5	12
Re-vaccinations	—	—	1	8	13

104 primary vaccinations were undertaken compared with 97 in the previous year. Re-vaccinations numbered 22.

Vaccination is performed under the National Health Service by General Practitioners. Emergency clinics can be operated in the event of an outbreak of smallpox in County Health Clinics at Salisbury and Swindon. Vaccination propaganda is undertaken by the County Health Authority.

Food Poisoning

No cases of food poisoning were reported.

National Assistance Act, 1948

SECTION 47 : REMOVAL TO SUITABLE PREMISES OF PERSONS IN NEED OF CARE AND ATTENTION

It was not found necessary to obtain compulsory removal of any persons against their will from their homes.

This step is one that should only be considered after all the assistance that can be given by Home Helps, District Nurses, National Assistance Officers and Welfare Officers, etc., has failed to provide the care and attention needed.

R E P O R T

o f t h e

P U B L I C H E A L T H I N S P E C T O R

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in presenting my fifth Annual Report for this area. I regret to record that 1961 was a particularly frustrating year and progress recorded previously was seriously impeded. This was due to office difficulties—a new clerk commenced duties in December, 1960, and resigned in May. Then for three months, we had no office staff and with all the routine clerical work I have as Housing Maintenance Officer having to be done promptly, I found myself very much chairborne for much of the time. In addition, training new staff twice in one year made less time for outside work.

However, by the end of year, these problems were fairly well sorted out and I look forward to regaining progress.

Two major Acts came into operation, the Housing Act 1961 in November and the Public Health Act 1961 in October. Both were hopefully anticipated and their operation will undoubtedly help our work, even if tackling Houses in Multiple Occupation under the new Housing Act causes many problems.

To the Public Health Committee, and to all colleagues for their ready assistance, I express my grateful thanks.

W. F. ACRES,

Public Health Inspector.

PUBLIC HEALTH ACT, 1936

(i)	Number of Inspections	...	...	58
	Number of Informal Notices served	...	...	20
	Number of Informal Notices complied with	...	...	17
	Number of Statutory Notices served	...	...	—
(ii)	Verminous Premises and Other Infestations			

Apart from one house where a severe infestation of bed-bugs was reported, no Public Health action was necessary. This house was successfully treated with proprietary spray.

The usual goodwill treatments for wasps and ants, where special circumstances made it necessary to assist, were generally appreciated.

(iii) **Drainage and Sewerage**

Several complaints of blocked drains and sewers were expeditiously dealt with by the Surveyor's Department. No legal action was necessary.

(iv) **Infectious Disease Enquiries**

As reported in the Medical Officer's section, cases of Infectious Disease requiring follow up enquiries by the Department were fortunately few. However, those few did cause some problems involving food handlers. One such suspected case amongst coloured immigrants required more than usual perseverance.

RODENT CONTROL

After several years of conscientious service, the part-time operator, Mr. J. Pearce, retired owing to ill-health. I was fortunate in obtaining the services of another operator who was already part-time with Bradford and Melksham Rural District Council. The arrangement is working well.

During the year, 67 treatments were effected, slightly more than the previous year.

CLEAN AIR ACT, 1956

Whilst no statutory action was taken, informal action during the early part of the year was very necessary. In some cases, mechanical failure caused "black smoke" emissions, and in at least one—faulty operation.

CARAVAN SITES AND CONTROL OF DEVELOPMENT ACT, 1960

There is only the one site licensed for 45 caravans on a residential basis in this area. After long deliberations a site licence was issued to the then site operator, and he appealed to the Magistrates against the time limit of 6 months imposed for the completion of the necessary works. The court varied this to 10 months. At the same time, the Council prosecuted for the operator's failure to supply a list of the occupants and vans, and he was fined £5. The Council found it necessary to include in the new site licence that such a list should be produced in order to check numbers of vans and any overcrowding.

The site was subsequently sold to a new operator and revised plans were submitted of a fresh layout and facilities.

SUB-STANDARD HOUSING PROGRAMME

Action during the year under the Housing Acts:—

Number of Inspections and Re-inspections	...	...	129
Number of Houses suitable for action under Section 9 (repairs)	...	...	—
Number of Closing Orders served under Section 17 (parts of houses)	...	...	1
Number of Demolition Orders served under Section 17			—
Number of Houses demolished (from previous years)			16

As reported last year, action under the first five years' programme was complete, and the Council considered their further progress. A total of 78 houses was agreed to be inspected to be dealt with in the next three years. Preliminary work was started on this phase, but nothing positive achieved.

MILK AND DAIRIES

The very unsatisfactory position regarding licensing and milk sampling was resolved towards the end of 1961. The Council then accepted delegation of most of the duties under the Regulations from the County Council. Until that time, no action had been taken except for a very few milk samples taken—all of which were satisfactory. Whilst no problems arose in the period of nearly a year when we were not responsible for this work, there was always anxiety, and a sense of relief when the duties were delegated back and one felt responsible again.

FOOD AND DRUGS

No slaughterhouse is licensed in the area and inspection of meat and other foodstuffs is normally on request of traders and the occasional complaint from members of the public. During the year some 32 Condemnation Certificates were issued for a variety of carcase meat and offals, fish and tinned foodstuffs. Informal action in the case of foreign bodies in cakes proved sufficient on one occasion, but a severe warning was necessary when a piece of perished plastic from an icing bag was discovered in cakes for the second time.

Food premises were inspected as and when possible, but no serious defects were revealed. In general a very satisfactory state of affairs exists.

No routine sampling of Ice Creams was possible, and one further Registration for the Sale of Ice Cream was issued.

SWIMMING BATHS, ETC.

(i) Blue Pool

This public pool was conducted in a satisfactory manner. Daily local checks are taken of free chlorine content and these records are inspected from time to time. Bacteriological samples taken by this Department all proved satisfactory.

Source of water is from the mains and constant re-circulation on a 6/8 hour basis is maintained. Treatment consists of filtration by twin Diafilters, chlorination and aeration over a cascade.

(ii) Paddling Pool, King George's Playing Fields

Supervision of this pool revealed a satisfactory degree of chlorination. Hand chlorination is employed.

(iii) Shurnhold School

Whilst the hopes I expressed last year of a suitable filtration plant being installed have not yet been fulfilled, bacteriological examination of samples taken was satisfactory. The present system is "empty-and-fill" and hand chlorination.

(iv) Lowbourne School

A new training pool was opened during the year. A simple plant of bag filters and automatic chlorination was installed and the water is constantly re-circulated. Samples taken for bacteriological examinations were satisfactory. It was pleasing to have plans submitted to this Council for prior consideration before the pool was installed.

PETROLEUM (CONSOLIDATION) ACT, 1928

The already satisfactory position was improved on yet again, largely due to the excellent work of the Council's Inspecting Officers—the Wiltshire County Fire Brigade.

Minor defects were readily corrected. Two premises discontinued storage and 22 premises were licensed involving a total gallonage of 46,600. This enormous reduction from 117,000 gallons the previous year was due to discontinuance of the bulk storage depot of a petroleum company.

GAME ACT, 1831

One licence was issued authorising a shopkeeper to buy and sell Game.

DISEASE OF ANIMALS (WASTE FOODS) ORDER, 1957

Once again, time did not permit any visits in this connection.

RENT ACT, 1957

No tenants made application for Certificates of Disrepair.

NOISE ABATEMENT ACT, 1960

I said in the preamble to last year's Report that this Act might increase our work—and serve a useful purpose, and so it turned out to be. Ice cream vans chiming after 7 p.m. gave most trouble, and energetic steps taken at the onset to curb this nuisance seemed effective. Verbal warnings were given to the drivers followed by letters to the firms concerned. No legal proceedings were taken. This action necessitates much evening work but the results seem worthwhile and I am under the impression that this nuisance, at least, has been stopped.

Another facet of this nuisance was abated following advice from the Noise Abatement Society. A fish and chip mobile van commenced activities in this area, announcing his arrival by sounding his horn after 7 p.m. The Society's advice was that a horn could be construed as a loudspeaker, etc., under the Act, and following a letter to the firm, no further nuisance after 7 p.m. was noticed.

A local firm also consulted me following complaints they had received of a noise nuisance at night from their air compressors. We agreed on the construction of a 13½ in. solid brick housing to surround the compressor and this gave a 32 dB reduction from source to the houses opposite.

Whilst having the loan of a Sound Level Meter in connection with a paper I presented to the Association of Public Health Inspectors on Noise Abatement, I took the opportunity of checking noise levels in the town. The meter only once read over 100 dB level—in the local Assembly Hall at "Pop" night! Peak of 104 dB was observed. Threshold of Painful Sound is somewhere between 120 - 130 dB.

FACTORIES ACT, 1937

Action taken is shown in the following tables:—

FACTORIES

Inspections

- (1) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are enforced by Local Authority (non-power)
- (2) Factories not included in (1) in which Section 7 is enforced by Local Authority (power)
- (3) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by Local Authority (excluding outworkers' premises) ...
- Total ...

	Number on Register	Inspections	Written Notices	Occupiers Prosecuted
	1	—	—	—
	40	16	—	—
	1	—	—	—
	42	16	—	—

	Found	Remedied	To H.M. Inspector	Referred By H.M. Inspector	Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted
Want of cleanliness (S.1) ...	—	—	—	—	—
Overcrowding (S.2) ...	—	—	—	—	—
Unreasonable Temperature (S.3) ...	—	—	—	—	—
Inadequate Ventilation (S.4) ...	—	—	—	—	—
Drainage of Floors (S.6) ...	—	—	—	—	—
Sanitary Conveniences (S.7)					
(a) Insufficient ...	—	—	—	—	—
(b) Unsuitable or defective ...	—	—	—	—	—
(c) Not separate for sexes ...	—	—	—	—	—
Total ...	—	—	—	—	—

Outworkers—Making wearing apparel (13-14) ... 13

Defects

A. C. BOLWELL
Electric Press
Melksham
